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FOR SIXTEEN YEARS, THE LESBIAN AND GAY WEEKLY

Feminists gear up for D.C. action

Civil disobedience may follow NOW-sponsored march focused on reproductive rights and the ERA

By Chris Bull

WASHINGTON — Several hundred thousand activists from around the country are expected to make the trip to the nation's capitol for a massive April 9 March for Women's Equality/Women's Lives. Keeping abortion "safe and legal" and passing the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) are the two primary demands of the March, organized by the National Organization for Women (NOW). Preliminary planning is also underway for direct action at the Supreme Court on April 10.

"The organizing has been remarkable. We can't even keep up with the response. People are outraged by attacks on reproductive rights and want to fight back," said Ellen Convisser, president of Boston NOW.

Hundreds of busloads of activists from the country are lined up to descend on the Capitol, said Tamar Abrams, director of communications for the National Abortion Rights Action League (NARAL). "Millions of women will be silent no more. We have to show the courts, Congress and the states that we are the majority," she said.

In addition to widespread mobilization of feminists and reproductive rights activists, NOW is encouraging lesbian and gay participation in the March. "We expect great participation from the lesbian and gay community. Lesbians have always been leaders in the struggle for abortion rights, but we are seeing increased interest on the part of gay men as well," said Nancy Buermeyer, NOW's lesbian and gay liaison.

The March, which will assemble at 10 a.m. on the Mall and rally at 1:30 on the Capitol's west side, was planned last fall to respond to several recent attacks on women's reproductive freedom — including those by "Operation Rescue" (OR), an anti-abortion organization. OR has gained con-

siderable media attention by demonstrating at clinics where abortions are performed and by harassing women who seek abortions.

Organizers also attribute the surge in national and local organizing for the event to the Supreme Court's Jan. 9 decision to review the constitutionality of a two-year-old Missouri law severely limiting a woman's right to abortion.

Missouri state officials, backed by the U.S. Justice Department, have urged the court to overturn *Roe v. Wade*, the 1972 decision legalizing abortion. The Missouri case, *Webster v. Reproductive Health Services*, involves the constitutionality of a law that declares that human life begins at the "moment of inception" and that "unborn children have protectable interest in life, health and well being."

The law, one of the most restrictive abortion laws in the country, bars the use of public funds to counsel women on abortion; prohibits the use of public hospitals for abortions that are not necessary to "save" women's lives; prohibits participation by public employees in assisting in abortion procedures; and requires doctors who believe a pregnancy is beyond 20 weeks to test weight and lung development to determine if the fetus could survive outside the womb. In 1987 the law was struck down by the Eighth Circuit Court on the grounds that it unconstitutionally denied a woman's right to privacy.

Activists say they believe the case signals a willingness on the part of the conservative majority on the court to overturn or further limit women's legal access to abortion. Access to safe abortion has become more restricted since it was legalized in 1972. Only 11 states allow funds for poor women seek-

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Arbitrator rules in Woo's favor

By Chris Bull

SAN FRANCISCO — As GCN goes to press, a court-appointed arbitrator has ordered the University of California at Berkeley to reinstate lesbian Merle Woo to her position as lecturer with full back pay, benefits and seniority. Woo, an Asian-American and Trotskyist-feminist, charged the university with discrimination based on

race, sex, sexuality and political ideology after she was fired in 1982 and again in 1986. Woo was supported by the American Federation of Teachers and lesbian and gay organizations around the country.

Although Arbitrator Leo Kanowitz said he did not find evidence of discrimination, he ruled that the university had acted in an "arbitrary and unreasonable manner." The university has ten days to accept the ruling or make an appeal, according to Nancy Kato, coordinator of the Merle Woo Defense Committee. "We're very happy with the decision. We think it is the result of much public support from around the country," she told GCN.

Kato encouraged readers to call University of California Chancellor Ira Hegman and ask him to accept the arbitrator's decision. Hegman can be reached at (415) 642-7464.

□ filed from Boston



Jennifer Abod

Daley Jr. inherits Chicago

Sawyer loses Democratic primary despite Black and gay support

By Chris Bull

CHICAGO — Richard Daley, Jr., son of the Democratic mayor who helped define machine politics, defeated the incumbent Mayor Eugene Sawyer, who was supported by a majority of lesbian and gay voters, by a large margin in the Feb. 28 Democratic mayoral primary election. Daley will face Alderman Timothy Evans, a progressive who is running as an independent, and Democrat-turned-Republican Richard Vrdolyak, in the April 4 general election.

Lesbian and gay activists disagreed about the meaning of Daley's victory. Laurie Dittman, co-chair of the Gay and Lesbian Town Meeting, told GCN that Sawyer was the community's strongest supporter among all the mayoral candidates. Sawyer is widely credited with convincing several aldermen to vote for the inclusion of sexual orientation in the city's human rights ordinance, which passed on Dec. 21 after going down to defeat for 14 consecutive years.

"We're pretty depressed. Sawyer has done much for us. It feels like an open door was closed for us. None of the other candidates has displayed much access for us," said Dittman. She pointed out that Daley, after actively lobbying the Chicago City Council to pass the human rights ordinance, subsequently distanced himself from the lesbian and gay community. Dittman maintained that Alderman Tim Evans, who is Black, has never been a strong supporter of the community, and that he privately considered dropping his support of the ordinance when it was clear Sawyer would gain politically from its passage.

Evans' supporters argue that he is a protege of the late Mayor Harold Washington, who was considered to be a strong ally of the lesbian and gay community. Evans is running as the Harold Washington Party candidate, a party he founded to stress his ties with the popular mayor.

Mary Mack, a member of the Lesbian and Gay Progressive Democratic Organization, told GCN that Evans is more supportive of lesbian and gay issues than Daley. "We fought the Daley machine for thirteen years

to get the bill out of committee. Now we are talking about his son, but he was more or less forced into supporting the bill to even be considered in the community. Evans was with us for ten years when our political future was not so great," she said.

Evans is more progressive on almost every issue important to the lesbian and gay community, commented Mack. She pointed out Evans is strongly pro-choice, while Daley opposes abortion; he has consistently supported increased funding for public education and health care; he has taken a hard line against police brutality; and he supports explicit AIDS education.

Many members of the lesbian/gay and Black communities were angered when a group of white aldermen blocked Evans' bid to become mayor after Washington's death by supporting Sawyer. Given Evans' close ties to Washington, turnout for Sawyer in Black wards was low, although he captured almost 95 percent of the Black votes cast. Daley captured 91 percent of the white vote.

Exit polls in Chicago also indicate that Daley overwhelmingly captured the city's large Jewish vote. Sawyer alienated many Jewish voters when he was slow to fire a staff member who publicly accused Jewish doctors of injecting HIV antibody positive blood into Black babies. Although exit polls indicate lesbian and gay voters turned out in large numbers for Sawyer, it was not enough to overcome heavy support for Daley in predominantly white non-gay wards. In one largely white ward, Daley outpolled Sawyer 29,329 to 920.

Although many lesbian and gay voters may prefer Evans to Daley, Dittman said he has very little chance of winning the general election. "The reality is that last night was our last shot at having a mayor who is completely committed to lesbian and gay issues," she said. The Democratic nominee has won the general election for the last 60 years.

Dittman decried what she said were racist voting patterns by white voters. "Despite

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Quote of the week

"Mr. President, please do not fall victim to the stereotype that all gay voters are liberal Democrats. Millions of gay voters, such as the members of our organization, support the beliefs and the candidates of the Republican Party."

"We wish you success in leading our nation to be kinder and gentler — all we ask is that gay Americans not be excluded."

— From a letter sent to President Bush by Republicans for Individual Freedoms, a gay Republican organization. Stay tuned for the president's reply...

Efforts to oust Texas judge continue

AUSTIN, Texas — The Texas State Commission on Judicial Conduct made a rare move Feb. 27 by declaring it will institute formal proceedings against Judge Jack Hampton of Dallas, who lightened the sentence of a man convicted of murder in part because his victims were "queers." (See *GCN*, Dec. 25, 1988.)

The Commission's decision means the state's Supreme Court must appoint a "Master," who will conduct a hearing and issue a report to the Commission, which can then recommend to the Supreme Court that Hampton be removed.

"This decision is certainly more than we expected," said Martine Torres-Aponte, a spokeswoman for the Texas Human Rights Foundation, a lesbian and gay group that has protested Hampton's actions and demanded his removal from the bench. Torres-Aponte said it was not clear how long the formal proceeding might take. "Since Hampton comes up for re-election in 1990, they might just drag this thing out and then he wouldn't run," she said, noting that the Commission might not be interested in moving too quickly.

But she added that the Commission's decision was relatively rare, and therefore a strong statement about the weight of opposition to Hampton's remaining on the job. "We don't have statistics for 1988, but of the 515 disciplinary actions considered [by the Commission] in 1987, only one case resulted in formal proceedings," she said.

□ Jennie McKnight

Rights bill backers strategize

BOSTON — About 50 lesbian/gay civil rights advocates held an all-day gathering Feb. 25 to hear a progress report on the Massachusetts lesbian and gay civil rights bill. Sponsored by the Massachusetts Lesbian and Gay Political Caucus (MGLPC), MASS ACT OUT, the Greater Boston Lesbian and Gay Political Caucus, and the Massachusetts National Organization for Women, the event included a series of brief presentations by various bill supporters on topics including "Phone trees and phone banking," "Fundraising," and "Visibility Actions."

Originally billed as a "summit" of political, religious, and social groups from across the state to strategize and mobilize community efforts to pass the Lesbian and Gay Civil Rights Bill, organizers who said they expected to attract 1,000 people attributed the relatively low turnout to Friday evening's snowstorm.

The bill, which was filed for the seventeenth consecutive year Dec. 7, was voted out of the Commerce and Labor Committee Feb. 17 and is expected to be debated on the House floor in April. In order to ensure the bill has the best opportunity for passage, Barbara Boring, lobbyist for the Massachusetts lesbian and gay civil rights bill, said the bill needs to be released from the Committee on Bills in Third Reading by the beginning of December. Because that Committee can hold the bill for 45 days, it must first pass through the House Floor, the Senate Ways and Means Committee, the Senate Steering Policy Committee, and the Senate floor debate and vote by mid-October.

Last year, the bill was effectively killed by Sen. Arthur Lewis (D-Boston) who chaired the Committee on Bills in Third Reading and held the bill for the maximum 45 days

allowed in order to prevent it from passing. This year's chair, Sen. William MacLean, Jr. (D-Fairhaven), has said he will not hold any bills for the purpose of preventing them from passing. However, Lewis is now chair of the Senate Ways and Means Committee where the bill begins its journey in the Senate.

Arlene Isaacson, former lobbyist for the Massachusetts Lesbian and Gay Political Caucus, said "The bill [in previous years] hasn't lost. We just haven't won yet." She explained that the key to getting the bill passed is organizing more people to actively lobby for the bill. "The right wing Republicans, the Southern Baptists, the Phyllis Schlafley-like organizations have all out-organized us."

Isaacson also stressed using the term "civil rights" in lobbying efforts. She said they are trying to break away from the use of "gay rights" because, for many, that connotes giving lesbians and gay men special privileges.

□ Judy Harris

ACT UP! pops up overseas

LONDON — The AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power (ACT UP) has gained its first European chapter (as well as an exclamation point) with the formation of ACT UP! LONDON, according to *Gay Times*. The direct action group's first demonstration was held outside the annual general meeting of drug manufacturer Burroughs Wellcome, protesting the company's "excessive profiteering" in its marketing of AZT.

Modeled after U.S. groups of the same name, ACT UP! LONDON is committed to "highly visible street protests aimed at improving the standard of media reporting about AIDS, countering Government indifference and demanding the swift release of promising drug treatments."

□ Christopher Wittke

Mexican gay archives formed

MEXICO CITY — Gay activists in the capital city have recently established an archive here, to be called the Centro de Información y Documentación de las Homosexualidades en Mexico (CIDHOM). According to spokesperson Juan Jacobo Hernandez, the group is seeking donations of books, magazines, newspapers and other materials related to gay and lesbian issues. CIDHOM's mailing address is: Apartado Postal 13-424, Mexico 13, D.F. 03500, Mexico.

□ John Kyper

Prisoner challenging HIV antibody testing seeks lawyer

SANDSTONE, Minn. — A prisoner at the Federal Correctional Institution here challenging the Federal Bureau of Prisons policy and the Presidential executive order requiring HIV antibody testing as a release condition for federal prisoners is seeking a volunteer attorney to handle his lawsuit. *Starchild v. Reagan*, brought by Adam Starchild in June, 1988, is pending in the United States District Court for the District of Columbia. Interested attorneys or legal aid organizations are invited to write to Starchild or check the court file for more details. Readers are invited to bring this case to the attention of D.C.-area law firms that might be interested in *pro bono* work. To contact Starchild, write to: Adam Starchild, 04690-067, Box 1000-C, Sandstone, MN 55072.

□ Adam Starchild

Correction

The obituary for Michael Hirsch that appeared in the Feb. 25 issue of **GCN** incorrectly listed the address for his memorial. The service will take place Monday, March 6, at 9:30 a.m. at St. Francis Xavier Church, 30 West 16th St., in New York City. □

GAY COMMUNITY NEWS

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY NOTES

As part of this International Women's Day issue of **GCN**, this section of **News Notes** has a special focus on women.

Black lesbians to meet in England

LONDON — The Second National Conference of Black Lesbians is scheduled to take place in England in April. According to the newsletter of the International Lesbian Information Service (ILIS), the planning group for the event is seeking funding from "anyone who is interested in contributing to fighting sexism, racism and homophobia." The conference is open to anyone who identifies herself as both Black and lesbian, and Black lesbians from all five continents are encouraged to participate. For information, write: Camden Lesbian Centre and Black Lesbian Group, 54-56 Phoenix Road, London NW1, England.

□ Jennie McKnight

Thai lesbian group fundraising

BANGKOK — The lesbian feminist group here is raising money by selling notecards with reproductions of lesbian erotica from ancient Thailand. The cards are available through Interpot (the group that publishes the ILIS newsletter). For price information and to order, write to Interpot, COC, Rozenstraat 8, 1016 nx, Amsterdam, the Netherlands.

□ Jennie McKnight



International soccer tourney seeks dykes

BOSTON — The Boston Soccer Club is looking for lesbians to help organize a women's component to the international soccer tournament to be held in Boston Oct. 6-9, 1989.

The Massachusetts Bay Soccer Championship is the third annual tournament since Gay Games II. In preceding years, at Denver and Seattle, only men's teams participated. The Boston Strikers membership hopes women's teams will participate so that the event will better represent the sport and the community. Women's teams are invited to participate in the Mass. Bay Championship regardless of whether a separate division is organized. But support from local lesbians is necessary to help plan to make a women's division possible, and to make the Mass. Bay Championship more responsive to the diversity of athletes playing soccer.

The Boston Strikers are proud that Boston was chosen site for this international event and look forward to hosting gay and lesbian soccer players.

If you are interested in helping organize the Massachusetts Bay Soccer Championship, please contact Jeff Pike, (617) 547-8046 or Erik Andersen, (617) 423-0929.

□ Jeff Pike

Aboriginal woman to chair Australian AIDS panel

DARWIN, Australia — Bernadette Hudson, an Aboriginal Health worker and coordinator of the Northern Territory Aboriginal AIDS Programme, has

been chosen to chair one of the federal government's six panels preparing a national report on AIDS.

In August, 1988, when Hudson addressed the Venerology Society's Conference in Melbourne, she spoke in a straightforward way about people learning to care for each other and explained how she uses the storytelling traditions of Aboriginal culture in teaching her program about AIDS.

One of the educational techniques Hudson has developed is to divide AIDS information into five parts — one for each digit of the human hand. The technique eliminates the need for leaflets. "People," she said, "don't read them. You can't say you forgot your hand. It's with you everywhere. It's a memory aid people can take away with them and keeps the message alive."

□ Kendall Lovett

Lesbian groups gain strength in Latin America

LATIN AMERICA — Lesbian organizing and activism in many Latin American countries has undergone rapid growth during the last five years, according to the international lesbian and gay newsletter *Paz Y Liberacion*. In a report published last fall the newsletter reported on the work of several groups.

The oldest lesbian group in Latin America is the Grupo Acao Lesbica Feminista (the Lesbian Feminist Action Group), which has been involved in the feminist movement in Sao Paulo, Brazil, for eight years. The group also publishes a magazine in Portuguese.

The Colectiva Lesbica Feminista Ayuquelen is the only lesbian or gay organization in Chile, where the government views homosexuality as a threat to the state. The Ayuquelen collective, which has been able to send representatives to various international lesbian and gay meetings, is trying to start a quarterly bulletin as well as encourage the formation of a gay male or mixed group.

There is one lesbian group in Peru, called Grupo de Autoconciencia de Lesbianas Feministas (GALF). The group organizes consciousness-raising workshops for lesbians, publishes a newsletter called *A Margen*, and is active in the national feminist movement.

In the Dominican Republic a lesbian feminist group called the Colectiva Militante has been active for several years and publishes a magazine called *Pezones*.

Costa Rica has at least three lesbian feminist groups that are active, one of which is located in San Jose.

Mexican lesbians have active organizations in at least three cities. The Grupo Lesbico Patlatomali is a three-year-old organization in Guadalajara that hosted the first Mexican National Lesbian Conference in 1987. Lesbianas de America Latina (LAL), of Mexico City, hosted the first Latin American and Caribbean Lesbian/Feminist Conference, which had over 300 participants in Cuernavaca in 1987. And a new group has been organized in Tijuana called the Grupo Lesbico de Tijuana.

For more information about how to contact these and other Latin American lesbian and gay groups, as well as lesbian and gay groups around the world, contact *Paz Y Liberacion*, P.O. Box 66450, Houston, TX 77266.

□ Jennie McKnight

Lesbians raped by cops in Guadalajara

GUADALAJARA, Mexico — Twenty lesbians were arrested and raped by police officers here Nov. 12, according to the International Lesbian Information Service (ILIS). Based on information from Latino gay activists in San Diego, California and Tijuana, Mexico, ILIS reported that the attack began when police raided a local gay disco.

Since there is no gay newspaper in Guadalajara — which has a population of three million — several of the women tried to take out advertisements in local newspapers to publicize what had happened to them. Only one paper reportedly accepted their ad.

The ILIS report added that there have

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Sydney Mardi Gras draws more dykes

Huge annual event also highlighted by homophobe's ire

By Kendall Lovett

SYDNEY — The Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras held here Feb. 3-18 was the largest in the event's 12-year history, partly due to a significant increase in the numbers of lesbians participating. The larger presence of



A participant in the 1987 Gay Mardi Gras

little political comment in the parade's content. Political messages might have been expected, since the Australian states of Queensland, Tasmania and Western Australia persist in retaining repressive laws against gay people.

The parade was not without controversy, however. New South Wales (NSW) parliamentarian Reverend Fred Nile, of the homophobic Call to Australia Party, tried to get police to stop the parade and take action against the group carrying an effigy head on a mammoth platter of the Rev. Fred "Egypt." The effigy was inspired by Nile's failed attempt last year in the NSW parliament to ban the 1989 Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras.

The police probably realized that they might have had a full-scale riot on their hands if they had heeded Nile's request. Nile's much-publicized demands in the mass media during the few days before the event undoubtedly influenced a considerable number of onlookers to come to see a float that had so enraged the fundamentalist Christian leader.

Another NSW parliamentarian, Independent Clover Moore, took a distinctly different approach as she spoke at the opening of the Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras Festival Feb. 3. Moore told the crowd, "As with all the festival and the parade itself, it's an important expression of gay pride. As a community you have a lot to be proud of. You successfully stage one of the world's most spectacular and remarkable grass-roots community events. You are doing it at the same time that you are confronting the most serious health crisis of our time. This is a tribute to your courage, your strength and your resilience." □



Boston lesbian/gay agenda forum (L-R) panelists David Sondras, Angela Bowen, moderators Marla Erlien, Derek Link, and panelist Margaret Cerullo (standing)

Laura Wolf

Pondering the gay '90s

CAMBRIDGE — A spirited crowd of nearly one hundred filled a room at the Harvard Divinity School to participate in "Visions for Lesbian and Gay Activism in the '90s," a March 1 forum sponsored by MASS ACT OUT. The event featured speeches by David Sondras, openly gay Boston city councilor; Angela Bowen, co-chair of the National Coalition for Black Lesbians and Gays (NCBLG); and Margaret Cerullo, a member of MASS ACT OUT.

Sondras advocated looking beyond the Massachusetts state gay rights bill toward a new definition of "what freedom really is" for lesbians and gay men. He said the community must look to one another for support and approval, not the straight world. "Our power comes from a decision that we made, that what we are is okay," said Sondras.

Bowen outlined what she believes should be the Black lesbian and gay agenda for the '90s. She promoted pushing the mainstream media to include Black lesbians and gay men; organizing in women's health issues; recording Black lesbian and gay history and culture; creating lesbian and gay caucuses in Black social and professional organizations; and fighting homophobia in Black churches. Bowen ended her talk by quoting Black activist Mel King, "Go for what you want, rather than what you can get."

Cerullo said the lesbian and gay community should remember that it has much to offer straight society. "We have learned to create new spaces for ourselves.... We are creative and view our bodies in a way others can learn from." She spoke about why many lesbians are AIDS activists. "The extraordinary courage displayed by gay men has inspired many of us. It's a riveting place for us to be," she said.

Cerullo also blasted a recent article in **The Nation**, a biweekly progressive magazine, contending that AIDS activists are "obsessed" with AIDS to the detriment of other pressing issues in the lesbian and gay community. "[Publishing the article] is an extraordinarily offensive action taken by the editors of **The Nation**.... But an editor has assured me that Susan Sontag and Gore Vidal ... will respond in an upcoming issue," said Cerullo to laughs from the audience.

The question-and-answer period was devoted to a recent controversy over the city Health Department's closing of the gay male bathhouse, Club 297, and the subsequent fire which destroyed both the bathhouse and Somewhere Else, the city's only lesbian bar.

David Hamburger of MASS ACT OUT criticized members of the lesbian and gay community who worked with the city to close down the bathhouse (See **GCN** Feb. 5, 1989).

Sondras criticized an editorial in **Bay Windows**, a local gay publication, and comments made by members of the lesbian and gay community praising the city's action. "It's sad to me that [Boston Mayor Ray Flynn and Deputy Health Commissioner Sandy Lamb] were more sensitive to what the bathhouse means to gay men than some members of our own community," said Sondras.

A number of lesbians lamented the loss of Somewhere Else and encouraged the audience to consider ways of creating meeting spaces for lesbians. Marla Erlien of MASS ACT OUT said the Saints, a multi-racial women's collective, is currently looking for a space to open a woman's bar, but that it might be as much as six months away from opening.

□ Chris Bull

March

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ing abortions.

As a result, activists told **GCN** it is time to "up the stakes" in the fight for reproductive freedom.

Direct action at the Supreme Court

Sue Hyde, director of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force's (NGLTF) Privacy Project (aimed at repealing sodomy laws), said she advocates a feminist vigil at the Supreme Court beginning April 26, when the court will hear oral arguments in the *Webster* case.

Hyde, who helped organize the Oct. 11 ACT NOW civil disobedience (CD) at the Food and Drug Administration in Maryland, said that mainstream reproductive rights organizations such as NOW often shy away from CD as a political tactic. She said she was working with other grassroots activists to organize a "direct action at the court, where people have the option of getting arrested." Hyde said that the women's movement is facing a crisis and must take strong action.

"We have seen *Roe* chipped away over the years. I believe it's time for the women's movement to stand up and say 'We will not allow this to continue,'" said Hyde. She added that the "missing link" in the presentation of the *Hardwick* case (a 1986 case in which the Supreme Court upheld Georgia's sodomy law) was an activist presence at the court. "We allowed the justices to sit around scratching their heads, wondering if they had ever met a gay person before. Judges are not unaffected by the public. We can at least help create a context where judges at least understand that the public sentiment supports full reproductive

freedom for women."

Hyde also criticized NOW's emphasis on the ERA in promoting the March. "While reproductive rights are certainly on the agenda, they are also focusing on the ERA. [There is] nothing like beating a dead horse," she commented.

NARAL's Abrams told **GCN** she also thought the emphasis on the ERA was misplaced. "We must focus on the most pressing problem. Without the right to an abortion there will be no equal rights. I don't want to denigrate the ERA because I have been working on it since I was 17, but the threat to abortion must be addressed immediately."

Nancy Buermeyer, NOW's liaison to the lesbian and gay community, disagreed. She said the movement must continue to focus on long-term goals, not just on the case currently before the Supreme Court. She said the ERA, along with abortion rights, lesbian rights and anti-racism were the four major aspects of NOW's overall agenda. "While we will defend rights we already have, we don't want to work only from a defensive position. We must continue to fight for women's rights across the board," said Buermeyer. She added that NOW will not play a role in organizing direct action at the Supreme Court, but that the organization does not oppose it.

For more information about the March, contact NOW at (202) 331-0066.

□ filed from Boston

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COMMUNITY VOICES

GCN Job Openings

- Promotions/Classified Advertising •
- News Editor •

Promotions/Classified Advertising: Use direct mail marketing, exchange advertising, free distribution, renewal campaigns, and other strategies to increase subscription and newsstand sales of the paper. Log and process weekly classified advertising. Participate in weekly workings of **GCN**, including staff meetings, collaborating on editorials, etc.

Qualifications: Strong writing, administrative, creative, and organizational skills. Experience in design or public relations a plus. **Deadline:** April 10.

News Editor: Coordinate and edit the work of staff and volunteer reporters covering local, national and international events of importance to the lesbian and gay community. Write news stories as necessary. Participate in layout and production of the paper. **Qualifications:** Strong writing ability and editing skills, ability to work with deadlines, knowledge of lesbian and gay issues.

All **GCN** positions require a commitment to lesbian/gay liberation, feminism, anti-racism, an awareness of class issues, and a commitment to collective decision making.

Salary/Benefits: All positions pay \$200/week and include eligibility for ADW Workers Trust health/life insurance, routine health care through Fenway Community Health Center, paid sick leave and four weeks annual paid vacation. **GCN** offers staff members responsibility for their own jobs with flexibility and ample room for innovation.

To apply, please send resume and cover letter to **GCN** Job Search Committee, 62 Berkeley Street, Boston, MA 02116. Lesbians and gay men of color are particularly encouraged to apply.

Thank You

GCN thanks the Lesbian and Gay Speakers Bureau of Boston for helping us mail out extra copies of our special Black History Month supplement. Also, thanks to **GCN**'s regular and semi-regular Friday night newspaper stuffers who helped with the special mailing: Janna, Marc, Derek, Nino, Raymond, Ronn, Whitt, Mary, Julie, Richard, Elizabeth and Paul.

"Community Voices" and "Speaking Out" are parts of our efforts to provide a true forum of opinion for the community. We encourage you to send your ideas, feelings and comments to us, and to respond to ideas expressed in this space. We welcome all contributions except personal attacks. Copies of letters and "Speaking Out" contributions sent elsewhere are printed on a space-available basis. **GCN** reserves the right to edit letters and "Speaking Out" contributions for length and clarity, in consultation with the author. The opinions expressed are those of the author and are not intended to represent the views of the **GCN** membership.

Letter and "Speaking Out" contributions must be TYPED and DOUBLE-SPACED. Letters can be NO LONGER THAN TWO PAGES. "Speaking Out" contributions can be NO LONGER THAN FOUR PAGES. Send to: Community Voices or Speaking Out, **GCN**, 62 Berkeley Street, Boston, MA 02116.

Nothing to fear from testing but fear itself

[Ed. — **GCN** received a copy of this letter responding to Coordinating Editor Marc Stein's commentary in the Feb. 19-25, 1989, issue.]

Dear Marc,

I was interested to read "hindsights" in the latest issue of **GCN**. I recognize myself as the provider who saw you and want to make a few comments on your article.

First, you are correct in stating that Fenway doesn't have an official "policy" on HIV antibody testing. I never told you that. Fenway has no specific "policy" on this.

What I did say is that the *official position statement* of the American Assoc. of Physicians for Human Rights — the national organization of gay physicians, not Fenway favors HIV testing, and that I personally agreed with this position.

I am in turn "shocked" that your immediate reaction was "shock." Any good health care provider should share with you what they feel is in your best interests, even if you don't agree. I brought the subject up as matter-of-factly as I could. I did not use "scare tactics" but simply stated my medical opinion.

You are correct in pointing out the disadvantages of HIV testing from political and social viewpoints. However from a purely *medical* viewpoint, the advantages of getting an HIV test in a hi-risk group *outweigh* the disadvantages. I think it is too bad that we let politics and fear control our health promoting behavior at times, especially in Boston where we have anonymous testing sites. The anonymous sites here help weaken your first argument for not being tested. The argument is again a political one (that of HIV status being found out and used for discrimination) and not a medical one.

The second reason for not testing that you cite is lack of support systems. I think AIDS Action Committee and many other Boston groups do a wonderful job of supporting those who are HIV positive, particularly those in the gay community. For gay Boston, this reason is not valid.

The third reason you give has to do with your own fears. You speak of quarantine, segregation, and possibly your own separation from portions of your "community." Exactly who do you think will do the separating? Why *you* of course, by the attitudes you'll take because of the test result. If you're careful and take the right attitudes, I can assure you that little, if any, of this separation will occur. Shakespeare once wrote "There's nothing good nor bad, but *thinking* makes it so." (*Hamlet*). I've seen both people who test positive and people who test negative decide to shun the bars and other encounters because of it. I've also seen other people use their test result as a springboard to become more involved in their community, helping and volunteering where needed. Fortunately, after a while, most people who are positive use this information as a starting point for a very positive transformation of their lives. Two well known examples of this are described in the book *Beyond AIDS* which I highly recommend.

The things you hear about prejudice, job terminations, and related issues do happen. But they are the newsworthy *exceptions* rather than the rules. We all accept risks in our lives, then get on with living in spite of risks. Life's a lot easier driving and using public transportation. In Boston traffic these two activities can be life-threatening. They're risks we accept and then get on with living. By far the majority of people who take "the test" are glad they do. There are of course, exceptions, but again, they are exceptions — a definite *minority*.

Finally, I do respect your choices. I feel intelligent choices can be made by individuals who are aware of all of the facts. The facts about HIV are constantly being added to. All I wanted to do was give you an update of the *medical* facts. It is still your choice.

I never advise people to do things I myself wouldn't do. I've taken the test and am thankful I did. For me, I've derived many positive benefits from the knowledge of my HIV results. Rather than "separate" me from my community I feel a stronger part of it. Rather than deal with doubt and uncertainty, I can now deal with knowingness in an affirmative way. I've shared my results with others, and I can honestly say the information has always been received with respect. I have not encountered discrimination, ostracism, or other negative political or social side effects because of what I have chosen to do. On the other hand, I do not look for nor fear these effects. There's a metaphysical law that says if you look for something you'll find it, and if you fear something, that fear will in some way for you become your reality. I hope you have not chosen your course of action out of fear.

Sincerely,
Neal Rzepkowski, M.D.
Boston, Mass.

P.S. I challenge you to print this letter in your paper.

Gay Community News is produced by a collective dedicated to providing coverage of events and news in the interest of gay and lesbian liberation. The collective consists of a paid staff of ten, a general membership of volunteers, and a board of directors elected by the membership.

Opinions reflected in "editorials" represent the views of the paid staff collective. Signed letters and columns represent the views and opinions of the authors only. We encourage all readers to send us comments, criticism, and information, and to volunteer and become members.

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In touch with 'In Touch'

Dear GCN:

I can't agree with Michael Bronski's idea (GCN, Jan. 29-Feb. 4, 1989) that *Beaches* would have worked better if the two women protagonists had been or were lovers.

I can't think of anything worse than, for example, spending a vacation at a beach house with a former lover. I know, because that very thing happened to me a few years ago at Amagansett — and my former love brought his new boyfriend with him!

Also, although *Beaches* does share a theme with *Old Acquaintance* and *Rich and Famous*, in those films the two women were not friends. [In both *Acquaintance* and *Famous*] the critically acclaimed writer (Bette Davis/Candice Bergen) loathes the pulp fiction writer (Miriam Hopkins/Jacqueline Bisset), while the latter clings to the former as a means of gaining literary-worth-by-association even though she is very jealous of her. Both films end with the two friends looking as if they will now go through old age together, wry comments that even an old enemy is better than no one at all.

I think the real comparison for *Beaches* is with *The Way We Were*, with two ill-assorted folks coming together because they each fill a need for the other for a time. *Beaches* lacks the continuity and the emotional intensity of *Way*, however, since we never see the changes the two women go through. We are just given occasional glimpses of them every few years and have to fill in the blanks ourselves. *Beaches* works because the two stars are very *real* and we want to believe in their continuing friendship.

That said, there are indications in *Beaches* that much has been cut. For example, the official at City Hall who marries Bette and her boyfriend is a very well-known actor who is seen nowhere else in the film. The fact that he is wearing a neckbrace makes me think that there must have been other scenes with him and Bette in which she somehow caused the accident that sprained his neck.

Also, as a nit-picking comment, Bronski describes "C.C. Bloom (Bette Midler), a tough-talking and loud-singing 11-year-old from Brooklyn..." when, of course, the 11-year-old is really the excellent Mayim Bialik. (Yes, I know Bronski gives Ms. Bialik credit later in his review.)

Bob Stanford
Editor-in-Chief
In Touch For Men
N. Hollywood, Calif.

It saddens me

Dear GCN:

I'm real ashamed of the gay brothers out there that can't take a moment of their busy day to sit down and write a lonely gay brother that is down. I was in San Francisco the night the gays walked from Castro to City Hall after the verdict was given to Dan White for killing Mayor Moscone and Supervisor Harvey Milk. I feel that in San Francisco we went through a real emotional regression when Harvey was killed. A five year sentence for killing two men. I carry the scar under my lower lip to remind me of the night the gays broke the windows of city hall and turned over the police cars that was set on fire. I know what being gay and being proud is.

It saddens me that the brothers won't write to a prisoner. I'm doing three years cause of a inmate that sent me some altered money orders and I cashed them not knowing they was altered. But that didn't turn me cold and unfair towards people. There are some loyal, honest and beautiful gays that run their ads in GCN. I have learned that a letter can brighten up a boring day and put a smile on your face, sometimes a tear down your cheek. The gays in here we share one newspaper (GCN) plus we share our thoughts and warmth towards each other. It's nice to know what is going on in the outside world. It's good to have your mind escape from this place.

Sincerely,
Terry Blevins
03663-030
PO Box 1000
Milan, MI 48160

No AIDS education here

Dear GCN:

As you can see I'm still "in" and am having no problem getting my GCN each week. Thank you!

In response to your questions, as far as I know there are no support groups in this area for helping paroling or released convicts, gay or otherwise, find work and temporary housing. For that matter there are also no inhouse training programs directed towards helping one prepare for society after release, no saleable jobs, no academic levels above GED unless you can pay for college courses by mail. There's a computer course for the Superintendent's pets and stool pigeons with a class max of 10. This for 2000 men! There is not one training job here that prepares one for a real outside job. This is strictly a warehouse for the Department of "Corrections."

There's also no AIDS Ed. here. We have the highest total of cons with AIDS in the USA (246) and when one gets AIDS they are sent to the "Special AIDS Unit" to die. We call it our Second Death Row. It's self contained and isolated. They come in contact with no one from the general prisoner population ever.

Whatever one learns here is from TV or radio or hearsay (unless you get GCN). There is not one piece of literature here from the DOC concerning AIDS and I wish you'd print this fact in the paper with my name signed to it. I've seen 3 of my friends die here in 2 years. Gays are treated brutally here, so most stay undercover and that just spreads the disease and panic. So that's the name of that time, Mike.

Please send me any and all copies of Fag Rag and of Tiyo's 'in-cell exercise' booklet (free). Thank you and take care,

John E. Moss, Jr.
60432 Apt. 6R
3rd & Federal Sts.
Trenton, NJ 08625

Gay men should help lesbians find space

By Jenifer Hertz

The closing of Somewhere Else due to the fire that originated in the bathhouse upstairs must not go unnoticed by the lesbian or gay male communities. The day I found out about the closing I had, naturally, planned to meet friends at Somewhere [Else]. We changed the place to Club Cafe because it was a Thursday and Club Cafe "invites" women on that night. I spent the evening expressing my disappointment at the closing by yelling at every gay boy I saw. The general response I got was, "Yeh, it really stinks when a gay club closes down."

Maybe you don't understand, folks; this was not a gay club. This was the ONLY women's bar in the entire Boston Metropolitan area. By contrast, Chicago is home to five women's bars. Clearly, the women in Boston are upset and we will look for alternative locations to meet and dance. However, I believe that this is not strictly a lesbian issue. Where are the boys? Why aren't you outraged? Why didn't you run to help clean up the damage done to our bar? Why haven't you insisted that the bars you frequent — over 15 of them — offer prime nights to lesbians? We insist upon women-only space on Friday and Saturday nights at local gay bars. Yes, lesbians, like gay men, work and can't always go out dancing on Thursday and Sunday nights. Don't treat us

like second-class citizens.

It's no secret that lesbians play a big role politically supporting gay male issues. We have not merely paid lip-service to your causes. Indeed we have been in the FRONT LINES fighting for gay male issues — often doing work which does not impact the lesbian community directly. We are told, and believe, "if the gay boys get it, we'll be next." But in general, we do the work because we care. And you mustn't make light of the importance of women's bars to lesbians. These are the places where we have traditionally met other dykes and come out to ourselves and others. We draw support from these gatherings that fuels our political work.

The following is directed to gay males: now it's time for you to come to our aid. It's not enough to lament the closing of Somewhere Else. It's your responsibility to organize and actively work to create space for women — bar space, dancing space, social space, gathering space. And I know I didn't make this saying up; but, if you're not part of the solution, you're part of the problem.

Jenifer Hertz is a mathematician living in Somerville, Mass.

Sharing back-alleys

By T.J. Anthony

*My body's nobody's
Body but mine.
You got your own body,
Now let me have mine.*

Ronald Reagan may be gone from the White House, but the fallout from his court-packing binge these past eight years is upon us. The Supreme Court has taken a sharper turn to the right. A devastating movement to halt and reverse important privacy rights gains of the 1960s and 70s is gaining ground.

The latest strike is against case law that recognizes privacy rights to be inherent in the Constitution. The focus is an attempt by the Bush Administration to overturn *Roe v. Wade*, which permits legal and safe abortions for women. Attorney General Richard Thornburgh filed an *amicus* brief with the court in support of Missouri's restrictive abortion laws. The case, *Webster v. Reproductive Rights*, could be the vehicle used by the new conservative majority on the court to return abortion issues to the domain of state legislators. If this happens — as some legal observers, including Thornburgh, predict — abortion will be outlawed in some 45 states.

The prospect of such a court action is terrifying, and will have profound legal, political and social implications for lesbians and

The real terror will come if women are denied access to safe and legal abortions. The days of coat hangers and back-alley butcher shops are just a legal opinion away.

gay men. The harm to women and gays will be severe and take decades to remedy. But not before hundreds of thousands of women become impoverished, or physically and emotionally scarred.

Elimination of abortion rights plays neatly into the political agenda of right-wing zealots. They, along with the Roman Catholic hierarchy, largely comprise the movement to regulate women's bodies. These forces are well-known to the gay community. They double as major opponents of gay rights. They seek to control the bodies and lives of women just as they seek to exert control over you and me.

We must vigorously defend our rights whenever they are challenged. We must never tolerate judges or politicians who will chisel away our constitutional and legal guarantees. Reproductive rights is a funda-

mental gay rights issue. We must act now to fend off the attacks on abortion rights and abortion clinics from the religious fundamentalists. The loss of *Roe v. Wade* will significantly aid the Radical Right in its judicial campaign to eradicate any court recognition of a constitutional right to privacy. Since *Roe* is one of two cases that form the core of this legal doctrine, its elimination would

Gay men understand back-alleys. We understand fear.

We understand quack doctors. It wasn't long ago we put our faces to the ground and slinked along back-alley walls to reach nameless bars. We hoped to meet other queer men.

severely diminish the stature of similar constitutional claims in the future.

The real terror will come if women are denied access to safe and legal abortions. The days of coat hangers and back-alley butcher shops are just a legal opinion away. Women will be left scarred and sterilized for life. Others will hemorrhage to death. The bodies of women will once again be found in bathtubs, near hospitals, and in back-alleys.

Gay men understand back-alleys. We understand fear. We understand quack doctors. It wasn't long ago we put our faces to the ground and slinked along back-alley walls to reach nameless bars. We hoped to meet other queer men. We hoped even more, no one would spot us entering or leaving the hole. If we were caught, we could lose our jobs, our homes, our families, our reputations. We, like the women who entered the back-alleys, were branded criminals. Those who went to back-alleys had everything to lose — especially our lives.

And in many states gay people remain criminals thanks to the high court. And now those eight men and one woman will decide if women will be returned to back-alleys. How many people will slink along dark walls to reach nameless bars and quack doctors? How many men will continue to turn their bodies over to quacks for remedies to diseases caught in back-alleys because they fear revealing themselves to government health services? Or being sliced open by preying bashers? For the chance to live, how many women will put their bodies in the hands of abortionists bearing knitting

needles? And then die?

As gay men, we assert our rights to control our own bodies. It's our body to tattoo or pierce, or build up its muscles. We assert the right to poke a dildo or (condomized) penis up our anus if we want. And enjoy it, too. Or to hold another man's body against ours and to feel enriched. We assert the right to pro-create, or not, with a consenting partner. We assert the right to abort our active little sperms on bed sheets or in condoms.

We assert the right to use experimental drugs for HIV-infections with or without government permission. We assert the right to develop anti-AIDS therapies and test them on our bodies. Some even assert the right to choose when to release a last breath. And when our spirit has left our body, we assert the right to select a method for its disposal.

The issue really isn't about terminating an unwanted pregnancy through abortion. It's about control of one's body, one's future, one's life. These are all gay rights issues. It's about whether some women will live a full and rich life, or die in America's back-alleys.

To my gay and bisexual brothers, stand up now and be counted. Help defend *Roe v. Wade*. Let's stop this assault against the lives and rights of women.

*A woman's body's nobody's
Body but hers.
You got your own body,
Now let her have hers.*

T.J. Anthony is a feminist-gay rights activist from San Francisco. He is the chair of the Feminist Men's Alliance and the Judiciary Project. People interested in learning about "Men Who Care About Women's Lives," a men's campaign in support of abortion rights, can write or call FMA, 71 Ashton Avenue, San Francisco, CA 94112, telephone 415/337-2061.

The opinions expressed in Speaking Out are those of the author(s) and are not intended to represent the views of the GCN membership.

More notes

Continued from page 2

been several gay-related murders in Guadalajara over the past year, and that authorities have closed gay discos. Local activists seek international support for their demands, which include: punishment and dismissal of the perpetrating officers; immediate reopening of clubs frequented by lesbians and gay men; and the end to repression and violation of human rights based on sexual orientation.

Letters should be written to: Sr. Gobernado Constitucional del Estado de Jalisco, Palacio de Gobierno del Estado de Jalisco, Guadalajara, Jalisco, Mexico; and to: Sr. Eugenio Ruiz Orozco, Presidente Municipal de la Ciudad de Guadalajara, Palacio Municipal de Guadalajara, Jalisco, Mexico.

□ Jennie McKnight

Second conference for old lesbians set

SAN FRANCISCO — Organizing for the Second West Coast Conference and Celebration of old lesbians is underway, according to the planning committee in the San Francisco Bay Area. Dates for the event, which will be held at San Francisco State University, are Aug. 4-6, 1989.

"Following the success of the 1987 gathering held in Southern California, attended by 200 lesbians and their partners," according to a member of the planning committee, "it is now possible to answer the question, Where are the old lesbians? We are here."

The committee reports a grant from the Horizon Foundation has enabled them to secure the site. Individual donations are also coming in, and additional fundraising and organizing is underway across the country, according to the planners.

Contacts in the Bay Area for more information are: Natalie Zarchin (415) 528-0018 and Sally Binford (415) 989-5372.

Registration materials will be available on request from West Coast Conference and Celebration, P.O. Box 31787, San Francisco, CA 94131.

□ Jennie McKnight

GABRIELA banned by Aquino

MANILA — Philippine President Corazon Aquino, as part of her government's counter-insurgence program, banned the radical women's group GABRIELA. The group, which is a coalition of 101 women's organizations from around the country, has worked to oppose the economic and sexual exploitation of women as well as the presence of U.S. military bases. According to reports in *off our backs* and the *National N.O.W. Times*, GABRIELA has 40,000 members and chapters on every island of the Philippines. The reports say the group has criticized the Aquino government for failing to move against the elite in the country.

To protest the banning of GABRIELA, write: President Corazon C. Aquino, Malacanang Palace, Manila, Philippines. Send a copy of the letter to the support group GABRIELA Network, c/o N. Rosa, 58 W. 36th St., Apt. 4-A, New York, NY 10018.

□ Jennie McKnight

Yugoslavian lesbians hold festival

LJUBLJANA, Yugoslavia — A lesbian organization that formed here in January of 1987 held a lesbian film festival in December that they report was well-attended and received good local media attention. The group, called Lezbiska Sekcija, hopes to increase its membership due to the exposure, and plans to organize another film festival this year.

Lezbiska Sekcija also publishes a newsletter called *LEZBOZINE*. To contact the group, write: Lezbiska Sekcija, c/o Skue-Forum, Kersnikova 4, 61000 Ljubljana, Yugoslavia.

□ Jennie McKnight

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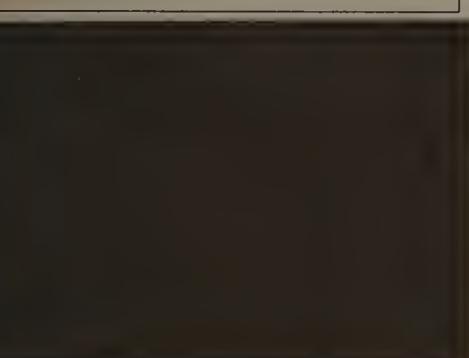
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Women capture the airwaves

By Stephanie Poggi

Boston women will capture the airwaves March 12 for the 11th annual International Women's Day radio broadcast. A day of programming organized exclusively by women — with half the shows produced by women of color and at least half by lesbians — IWD radio is a rare chance to stir up trouble on the air, and of course, entertain ourselves.

Observed throughout the world since the late 1850s, International Women's Day honors all women working for change and particularly recognizes the struggles of working class women. March 8 was officially proclaimed IWD in 1910 by the International Congress of Women meeting in Copenhagen. They aimed to show solidarity with women garment workers in New York who were fighting for better working conditions, more pay and shorter work hours.

The annual radio broadcast clearly takes the spirit of rebellion of this women's day to heart. Members of the core of organizers, incorporated as Boston Women's Community Radio (BWCR) in 1985, say they pride themselves on being "a voice for the voiceless." Melanie Berzon of BWCR adds, "If something's being covered in the mainstream media, we don't use our precious 16 hours to cover it."

The spotlight of this year's programming certainly points directly at a critical topic neglected by the media: women and AIDS. Some of the segments featured are "Black

Women and AIDS: Trouble on Trouble," produced by Beverly Smith and Helene Tomlinson; "Day by Day: Women Living with AIDS," produced by Eileen Bolinsky; and "Lesbians and AIDS: One Woman's Opinion," produced by Judy O'Brien. "The AIDS shows make up about 50 percent of the programs," says Berzon, "but the material is so powerful, it's almost double the hours."

Berzon told GCN that the particular emphasis on AIDS "came about because we got feedback last year on the lack of AIDS coverage." While there doesn't seem to be as clear a connection between listener response and this year's greatly expanded attention to lesbians, Tatiana Schreiber of BWCR says, "We've always wanted to do more lesbian stuff. It's been on our minds. And this year lesbians are really represented throughout, not just in the shows with 'lesbian' in the title."

Some highlights of the lesbian shows are "American Indian Lesbians: A Portrait in the Twin Cities," produced by Petra Hall, and "Immediate Family," a drama about death and long-term lesbian relationships, produced by Joan Schuman. A portrait of homeless women's lives includes a lesbian, and a roundtable on death and grieving is comprised of lesbians. Another lesbian-produced show and one you shouldn't miss the chance to wake up to is Kate Rushin's "lit-

Continued on page 11

International Women's Day Radio

Sunday, March 12, 1989, WMBR, 88.1 FM, Boston

8-9am □ Go For It Girl! Music and readings from Lindsay Ellison.
9-9:30am □ American Indian Lesbians: A Portrait in the Twin Cities — "Elders and Traditions" and "Homophobia and Acceptance." Produced by Petra Hall.
9:30-10am □ Every Inch of the Way: Homeless Women's Lives. Produced by Liz Galst with Tatiana Schreiber.
10-10:55am □ A Sunday Kind of Love. Ease your way into the day with Kate Rushin's soothing and inspiring musical montage. A little bit of jazz and a whole lot of soul.
10:55-11am □ Can You Train a Cat to do CD? Answers from the Nicole Hollander Fan Club Affinity Group. Produced by Sue Dorfman.
11-11:30am □ After Sorrow — Women in Vietnam today. Produced by Lady Borton.
11:30am-12:20pm □ Peace Begins At Home: Healing the Wounds of Child Abuse. Produced by Kay Gardner and Catherine Reid.
12:20-12:30pm □ Lesbians and AIDS: One Woman's Opinion. With Emily Fox, Health Education Advisor for Public Health AIDS Program in Western Massachusetts. Produced by Judy O'Brien.
12:30-1pm □ Hear My Soul's Voice. Women of the Jefferson Park Writing Center. Produced by Dar Maxwell and Sharon Cox.
1-2pm □ Black Women and AIDS: Trouble on Trouble. A discussion with members of the Black Women's Council on AIDS. Moderated by Jacqui Alexander. Produced by Beverly Smith and Helene Tomlinson.
2-3pm □ Songs of Struggle. Black women sing of slavery, civil rights and daily oppression in the USA, Caribbean and Africa. Produced by Fahamisha Shariat.
3-3:25pm □ Day by Day: Women Living With AIDS. Produced by Eileen Bolinsky.
3:25-3:30pm □ Living With the Virus, Not Dying of AIDS. One woman talks about living with AIDS while in prison. Produced by Tatiana Schreiber with Jane Gilooly.
3:30-4:30pm □ Women in Reggae. Sister Igene Samuel and Linda Thurston present the best of reggae music, poetry and song.
4:30-4:55pm □ Latina Women and Health. A live discussion with Maria Aguiar and others.
4:55-5pm □ The Right to Abortion is a Woman's Right to Life. Renewing the fight for abortion rights. Produced by Willa Seidenberg.
5-6pm □ La Mujer Latina: Numero Ocho. Latina women singers, musicians, heroines and poets. Produced by Vivian Carlo and Lillian Gonzalez.
6-6:30pm □ Women on the Edge of Time: Nafisa Hoodbhoy. Meet the only woman daily newspaper reporter in all of Pakistan. Nafisa Hoodbhoy is a maverick amongst social constraints of Muslim women. Recorded in Karachi, Pakistan. Produced by Jane E. Pipik.
6:30-7pm □ Elizabeth Vercoe. A contemporary composer's collage of the story of Joan of Arc. Produced by Michelle Sweet.
7-8pm □ Women With Disabilities Speak Out. Barriers and breakthroughs for disabled working women and mothers. Produced by Harriette Ranvig.
8-8:55pm □ AIDS is About Secrets. Women working in AIDS prevention and treatment from Boston and New York City tell all. Music performed by MC Lyte and Linda Tillery. Produced by Jane E. Pipik.
8:55-9pm □ AIDS Stories: A Mother Speaks. Produced by Terrie Waters.
9-9:55pm □ Sisters in Struggle. Poetry by Reflection and music by D. Patterson, featuring vocalists Kim Jones, Maria Turner and Mayra Welsh.
9:55-10pm □ Immediate Family. A powerful drama about death and long-term lesbian relationships. Produced by Joan Schuman.
10-10:30pm □ At A Loss: A Discussion of Death and Grieving. A roundtable discussion about the loss of parents, family members and friends, and its impact on our lives. Produced by Janice Irvine, Berit Pratt and Nancy Wechsler. Associate Producer Madge Kaplan.
10:30-11:30pm □ Studio Red Top Presents Jazz Highlights, 1987-88. Featuring Kristine Key, Hennetta Robinson, Cercie Miller and more.
11:30-Midnight □ Wrap-Up. It's your turn to talk. Call us at 253-8810. With Fahamisha Shariat and "the girls."
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Eva Johnson

Jennifer Abod

Claiming My Mothers, Exposing Aboriginal Consciousness to the World

An interview with Aboriginal, Black lesbian playwright Eva Johnson

GCN recognizes International Women's Day with a special news focus on women, our feature on women's radio, and this interview with Eva Johnson. Johnson is an Australian, Aboriginal, Black lesbian playwright and activist. She travelled on a speaking tour in the U.S. in late 1988 — the year that marked the 200th anniversary of the first white settlement in Australia, the official beginning of the colonization of the indigenous Aboriginal people by the British.

As government-sponsored celebrations of this bicentennial took place around the country, many Aboriginal people used the year to "expose white Australia." Johnson said that Aborigines — who have identified as Black since the late 1960s — organized marches for land rights inside Australia and travelled overseas to speak about their experiences. Black women, including Johnson, who were attending universities, "took the year off because it's 1988 and no one wants to graduate in 1988."

Johnson's appearance in Boston accompanied two films about Aboriginal women. The 1987 film, *Nice Colored Girls* by Tracy Moffat, focuses on the exploitation of Black women by British colonizers and contemporary white men in Australia, and on Black women's survival strategies. Also shown was an episode of *Women of the Sun*, a four-part television series based on a true story. It looks at the subjugation of Aborigines on a mission and the woman-led revolt against their Christian "keepers."

Johnson's comments at the event underscored the resistance of Black women to cultural and sexual violation. She also drew parallels between the ongoing struggles of Black people in Australia, South Africa and the U.S., and those of native people around the world — including Native Americans and the Maori people of New Zealand.

Among the commonalities is the government practice in many countries of couching attempts at repression or genocide in the language of "protection." The Aborigines Act of 1911, which denied Black people virtually all control of their lives, was designed "to make provisions for the better protection and control of the Aborigine and half-caste [half-Aborigine, half-white] in-

habitants" of the country. As Johnson notes, the "emphasis was on control," with the Act providing for almost complete segregation of Aborigines. It was illegal for Black people to be in urban (read white) areas or to have contact with white people. Aborigines had to apply for permission to marry. Half-caste children were removed from their mothers and made to grow up on Christian missions where they were pressured to deny their Aboriginality.

In 1939 an amendment to the Act further attacked Aboriginal culture and identity. It allowed an Aborigine to be "exempted" from the provisions of the Act of 1911 if he or she could completely cut themselves off from other Aborigines and act "white." The person had to prove "by reason of his character, standard of intelligence...to be capable of living in the general community without supervision." Exemptions could be revoked at whim and those who had them had to carry exemption forms at all times. In resistance, many Aboriginal people refused to accept exemption. This pass system, which resembles that of South Africa, was only eliminated 21 years ago when Aboriginal people won legal status as citizens of Australia.

Other attacks on Aboriginal people included sterilization of Black women and a policy of encouraging Black people to marry whites in an effort to "breed out" Aboriginal genes.

Resistance to these assaults has as long a history as colonization. One of the oldest and most central Aboriginal demands — that for land rights — was renewed shortly after Black people gained citizenship in 1967. The effort to regain traditional sites continues into the present and recalls the Native American fight for restoration of lands appropriated by white colonizers in the U.S.

Aboriginal people today, who now make up only one percent of the total population of Australia, have the highest rate of infant mortality in the world. Unemployment is exceedingly high and since 1980 there have been dozens of deaths of Black men while in police custody.

Johnson's political organizing has taken on these issues as well as land rights and feminist concerns. A primary vehicle for her

passionate work is the stage. (She is the first Aboriginal woman to have a play performed in a public theater in her country.) In 1979 she wrote and acted in *When I Die, You'll Stop Laughing*, a musical revue of Black experiences of "being whitewashed." The 1984 play *Tjinderella*, which she wrote, directed and performed, was based on Johnson's own experience of being taken from her mother to grow up on a mission. Johnson wrote that, in contrast to the Cinderella story, "Tjinda's godmother is the Department of Aboriginal Affairs whose magic wand gives false promises. Tjinderella's mission sandals (the government policies) are a misfit and Tjinderella will not live happily ever after until she is returned to her Dreaming (her land)."

In describing the goal of her work, Johnson says she seeks to encourage people to be "positive about their Aboriginality...I choose the tool of words, words that force me to write the truth of Black Women's history, of the past and living present. Theater is my arena, my political platform."

In an interview following her talk, Johnson spoke with Jennifer Abod, Jacqui Alexander and Evelyn Hammonds. Abod, who helped organize the interview, is a white lesbian feminist active in supporting the Black lesbian and gay movement. She is a veteran radio broadcaster and the founder of the "Say it, Sister" women's radio program. She has recently begun working in video. Alexander is a member of the Boston Coalition for Black Lesbians and Gays (BCBLG). She is of Afro-Caribbean background and describes herself as "the process of thinking through questions of Caribbean women and sexuality." Evelyn Hammonds is an editor of Radical America and is interested in Black feminist theories of identity politics.

□ **Stephanie Poggi**

Postscript: Speaking to GCN after the interview, Johnson let us know that Aboriginal women are leading the International Women's Day march in Adelaide on March 4. The women send their spirits around the world for peace and justice.

By Jennifer Abod, Jacqui Alexander, and Evelyn Hammonds

Jennifer: I'd like to start with a question about your lesbian identity — at what age did you discover you were a lesbian?

Eva: I was 19. But I didn't know that the thing I was having with this woman was a lesbian relationship. Mary was a nurse in the hospital in Adelaide where I was training to be a nurse. It just happened. We decided to share a room together and ended up being lovers for four years. It was a few years before 1967, before Black people were made citizens of Australia.

Jennifer: I know that you're now part of a Black lesbian collective of 12 women. How else have things changed for you as a lesbian since you were 19?

Eva: It's much different now because homosexuality is legalized in the state of South Australia in which I live. And it's much easier to name myself. I was very closeted when I was 18 and onwards until I was a little older. And I was married for six years after Mary left Australia and went back to England. While I was married I realized that I was living under some pretense, trying to be a "normal" heterosexual housewife and mother. I didn't mind the mothering, but I completely failed as a wife to a man, and a domestic.

Jennifer: When you had the relationship with Mary, was there a lesbian or homosexual subculture that you became part of?

Eva: No, not at all. I wasn't even truly Black-identified then. I was going through a personal crisis — about knowing who I was, who I was not. I had no models. And I didn't see very many Black women or Black people in general because we weren't allowed in the cities at that time, unless we had an exemption form, a form exempting us from the laws that governed Aboriginal people from 1911 to 1967. It was very difficult for me to identify with a Black group because there were just so few of us around. The ones who were in the cities were there for obvious reasons — either to be working for a white family or going to some sort of formal education, which at that time was a privilege. I had always been exempted so I was allowed to have this privilege.

Jennifer: Were you in the relationship with Mary when Black people became citizens? Could you talk a little bit about that?

Eva: It was during my third year of nursing that we were made citizens as a result of a national referendum, just 21 years ago. I do remember the day when all the nurses, everyone went up to the polling booth to vote. My girlfriend was with me. She was non-Black and she felt really relieved, because we had not only hidden our relationship but she had been afraid of being picked up for consorting — there were consorting laws about non-Black people walking with Blacks. Suddenly now she could walk with me freely, which before she could only do if I had my exemption form with me. So it was a freedom for both of us.

Jennifer: You said earlier that you ripped up your exemption form — was that after the law, or before?

Eva: It was soon after. A lot of people kept theirs as a historical document of that time. I wasn't political then and to me it was just like throwing away something that I had finished with.

Jennifer: Could you explain a little more about the exemption provisions and could you also talk historically about the relationship of half-caste to Black to Aboriginal?

Eva: Exemption was provided for by a 1939 amendment to the Aborigines Act. It radically changed the definition of Aboriginal identity. It basically allowed Aboriginal people who could prove that they could act like a normal white fella to become honorary whites. You had to prove that you could deny your Blackness and then you could go into any place that a white fella could go.

I was automatically exempted because I was a ward of the state, child of the state. My exemption was part of that. It meant that I had to act as a white person, that I had to think as a white person. That means I did not speak my language, I had no association with Aboriginal people. So I did that and I played white better than some white girls I know (laughter).

The half-caste situation came during colonization as the frontier was being won by

all the white men who were going after the bush, poisoning our water holes. It was part of the genocide and part of the process of the invasion, raping the women as they went along. Of course there was this high population of half-caste children, children who were half white and half Aboriginal. And, the government thought that it was a bit of an embarrassment to the white heroes.

Jennifer: Embarrassment because it admitted their raping —

Eva: They never acknowledged the raping, they explained that the women were oversexed. These women had no concept of morals, it was the women who actually procured these wonderful white men. That stereotype of Black women still exists today in white society.

Then, to supervise the half-caste children, the religious denominations came in. We had the Catholics, the Lutherans, the Church of Englands and the Methodists. The half-caste children made an industry for them. The four denominations took over and said, okay, the Methodists own this part of Australia, the Catholics this part, etc. And subsequently, children of half-caste were taken from their mothers and placed as far from their birthplaces as possible onto one of these reserves and brought up under one of the denominations.

It was seen as protection. The white men explained that traditional people didn't want us because we had white blood in us and that was taboo; they said traditional people were killing us. Of course, we found that to be a fallacy. Maybe it happened in some places, but it certainly didn't happen in my family, among my tribal people. I was taken away from my mother when I was two and a half. I was still being breast-fed. My brother and sister and I were torn away from her and that is the word I use because we were. And they put us on the Methodist mission.

Jennifer: In terms of political identification or just identification, do people use the words Aboriginal, or Black or half-caste —

Eva: We don't use terms like half-caste anymore. White people still do. They say, "She's not real Aboriginal because she's a half-caste." They use the term to discredit us whereas before they used the terms half-caste and quarter-caste to make themselves feel better about us *not* being Aboriginal. The more white you were the better you were accepted into white society.

But now I claim my Blackness and I say, "I am Black — I'm not half-caste, I'm not quarter-caste — I don't want to be the caste that you want me to be, I am Black." You know? And of course all Aboriginal people do identify as being Black now — this is what's making us stronger. We are becoming more positively identified with our color, our origin, our indigenousness, Aboriginality.

Jennifer: Do you date this from 1967?

Eva: Yes. It was in 1972 that the first land rights movement started, the first land rights marches. We set up an Aboriginal embassy at Canberra — which was always torn down

by the police — stating that we wanted land rights. We were generated by the civil rights movement in America and the Black Panther movement — we'd had talks in Australia with some members of the Black Panthers.

Our embassy, which was like a tent on the lawns in front of Parliament House in Canberra, stayed there until it was recognized that we wanted some form of legislation, and agreement that we could form our own Aboriginal Land Council. So that our traditional people could still have their sacred sites, their traditional ritual areas, they could still live in accordance with 40,000 years. You know, we were British subjects, we were part of the fauna and flora and we could be shot at random like a kangaroo. Black men were hung and white men could just walk free, and there was no crime. It was not a crime to shoot a Black person.

Jacqui: Was there a history of struggle before '67? You're identifying '67 as the critical year —

Eva: I recognize that there's always been struggle because we did resist in many areas, even while we were losing in terms of our physical strength and our numbers. It was never an acknowledged form of war even though it was war. Long before 1967 there were Aboriginal elders speaking out for land rights and Aboriginal rights.

Jacqui: So how did 1967 make it different? Was it that it raised the question of identity?

Eva: Well, in 1967, Aboriginal people were allowed to have access to our own services and we were actually employed in departments of Aboriginal affairs, in health, housing. And we set up the first free medical health center — the first free medical center Australia has ever had was set up by Blacks in Sydney. Anyone — Black and white — could get free medical service there.

Also, before '67 we were isolated. The housing policies in the cities allocated houses so far apart that it was difficult to travel to visit each other so we could maintain some kind of community. We were completely disintegrated; it was part of the psychological warfare against us by the government. But the Aboriginal consciousness was started long before '67 — we just really needed to expose it in some way to the world. We're still trying to expose it to the world now, because I'm amazed at the lack of information American people have about Black history.

Jacqui: You mentioned Black very consciously and you talked about claiming being Black and naming yourself — where did that term come from?

Eva: I suppose it was the Black Power and the Black Panther movements, recognizing that Black was beautiful. All Aboriginal kids started walking around with "Black is Beautiful" t-shirts. And in the late '60s and '70s Afro hair styles were in and everyone wanted an Afro hair style and white people wanted to be seen with a Black girl with Afro hair style — so we all went out and bought all these Afro wigs (laughter). All my models came from America; you know,

I looked at Nina Simone and Sojourner Truth and I was reading Black American literature, and I started saying, "I can name who I am."

The first book that I read was *This Bridge Called My Back* [Kitchen Table Press, Latham, N.Y.] I said, "God, these are Black women who are lesbians speaking out about being lesbians — I must write to them!" (laughter) "Claim me, I'm one!" I thought, "How wonderful that somebody else knows who I am."

And in '75 during the international women's year I spoke out and named myself in front of 800 women at a conference. I was at that time nursing for the family planning association. And I was speaking against the use of Depo-Provera which at that time was being used by our association on our young girls as a form of contraception — maybe forced sterilization. And at that time it was banned in America. I mean, it's still readily available in the hospitals in Australia. So I became politicized through my work. Of course, I was in a superior position. I was always either a nurse or someone who had some form of authority. And I was servicing my own people with the same techniques, the same indoctrination I had received. And I said, "Shit, I have to get out of this." And I decided never to work for the government again, and I haven't.

Jacqui: One of the questions I wanted to raise has to do with what you just mentioned — class contradictions. Because I would imagine that your class position is probably very much different from Aboriginal Black people who have no trace of white in them or should I say traditional, indigenous people?

Eva: Traditional Aboriginal people are people who are still living traditionally — I don't like to call them full-bloods, I call them traditional, my traditional elders. I am an urbanized, contemporary Black.

Jacqui: Okay, so what are the class differences between traditional and contemporary Blacks — and how have those differences played themselves out in political struggle? To what extent are the issues of traditional people brought onto the political agenda?

Eva: It's incredibly difficult because through the history traditional people were not allowed to have any contact with the contemporary Blacks. So it's been a process of us going back to recognizing that we are a unified identity, that we belong to one race. Since '72, since land rights, the traditional Aboriginal people have become more political in that all the people sitting on the land councils are traditional people, and rightly so.

Traditional people are also demanding their own community control and English as a second language. Contemporary Blacks recognize that traditional people have higher rank than us. I live in Adelaide; I fight politically for land rights because it was something that was taken away from me when I was two-and-a-half years old — my right to be indigenous, to be traditional was taken away when I was two and a half by

Continued on page 12



(L-R) Evelyn Hammonds, Eva Johnson and Jacqui Alexander

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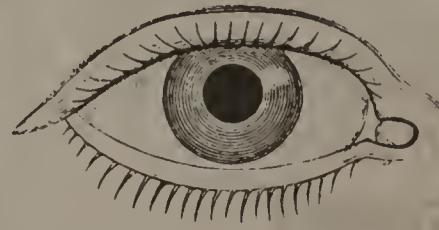
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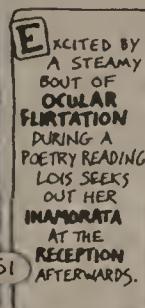
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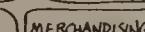
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Claiming

Continued from centerspread

this law that said that because I was mixed blood, I had to be removed from my traditional mother. So, whenever we have land right marches now — like the marches this year on the anniversary of 200 years of white invasion — the traditional people lead us. We never have a march where we don't recognize traditional people as our leaders.

And if I do any theater that involves traditional dancing, I must invite a traditional person to come in and choreograph it. If I use any form of body paint, I must ask the traditional people which ochres can I use, which body symbols and images I can use. Because there is no way that I will put on theater in contemporary Australia and stand up and say, "This is traditional Australia" without consulting my traditional dramatateurs.

Also, every year the traditional people come down and give us — the contemporary Black people — our dances, every year in Adelaide. They're recognizing that we are the lost children. They're claiming us. For me, as a lost Black, a lost half-traditional Black woman, it is vital for my growth, for my spirit, that I claim my origin and that I am claimed by my mothers.

Jacqui: That's such a wholesome way to represent it. Within the context of this country, we talk about something called ageism and there are older women who are not involved in the movement and there has to be a real conscious attempt to reach back and understand the struggles of older women. What you are describing is a very different context. You are reaching back to a source that is at the same time spiritual and sacred and political and wholesome, and without which you can't move ahead.

Eva: Sure. I mean, I was 36 when I found my mother. It took me 34 years to find her. And when I did, I found her in a hospital dying of white fella disease — she had terminal TB. But I found her. And she knew me, she knew me, she just...she knew me. And to me, that was the strength of the spirit, it was knowing inside of me that I belonged.

It was knowing that I had a totem, that I belonged to the Catfish Dreaming, that I had a tribal people called the Malak Malak People. So now I identify as Malak of the Catfish Dreaming born on Daly River in the Northern Territory. I have gone back, I have sat with my people and they all know my mother and they all know who we were. "Oh yeah," the old fella says, "We remember when you been taken away a long time ago. You come back now. Good. Sit down. You belong here."

That's really important, to know where you come from. It doesn't matter who you are or where you are, you have to find your origin, you have to find your source.

Jacqui: That's so powerful, that way in which you talk about claiming that history and what that means.

Eva: It's because I've found my source that no one can hurt me. No one can touch me. And this ageism thing — I was dying to be 40 so I could become a wise woman. (laughter) My god, and I'm wiser now, because I'm 42. (laughter)

Jacqui: Let me switch for a minute and talk about your politics that are connected to what we could call contemporary feminism.

Eva: Oh yeah, that's the part that gives me a lot of trouble (laughter).

Jacqui: What we'd like to find out is can you call what you are part of a contemporary feminist movement, and what does that entail? And then maybe we can think about the ways in which there are linkages to the traditional struggle.

Eva: The contemporary feminist movement is very slow in process at the moment because there are so many phobias. Not only is there homophobia, but phobia of belonging to the white feminist movement and being absorbed into the ideology of being white feminist.

I see feminism as a unified ideology in terms of all women fighting against all forms of oppression on women in general. But in Adelaide I have been criticized by Black women who say, "What do you want to be a feminist for, Eva? Why do you call yourself a feminist?" I'm a feminist with a *Black feminist* ideology, and within that I'm a Black feminist lesbian. And constantly I'm

talking to contemporary Black women who work for the public service and I say to them, "Why don't you question the system? Why don't you say that you don't like the fact that we don't have any shelters for Aboriginal women here in Adelaide?" And I say to them, "This is what I'm saying when I'm speaking out as a Black feminist."

And we don't have a women's refuge in Adelaide. We are using one of the five existing refuges for white women. But because I speak out like this against the system, I'm seen as a shit-stirrer. And I'm devalued and discredited.

Jacqui: So, women struggling to have their own shelters is one issue on the political agenda. What other issues are feminists struggling around?

Eva: We have an AIDS project through our medical center in Sydney and we produce our own booklets, and our own advertisements on AIDS with Black faces instead of white faces.

We are a bit reluctant at the moment to openly discuss the problem of incest. Incest is non-traditional in that it was never practiced in Aboriginal tradition in Australia. I see it as a white habit, and Black men are adopting all forms of white values and strategies to fight against Black women or to use as their power against Black women. Alcohol is one, of course. Incest is another. Rape. All of these are very important to address, but because there are only a few Black feminists in Adelaide, we don't know what avenue to start from.

I know that if we have an open seminar on incest, it will be seen as Black lesbians talking about something that we don't know anything about. But when I write about rape in my plays, Black women come along and say, "Yeah, that happened. Good on you, Eva! You say it, sock it to 'em."

Evelynn: I have a question that has to do with the film we saw last night about Aboriginal people on the missions. I was so struck by the two older women because their mannerisms were so much like Black women in America that I knew and my family — the attitude of not looking the white man straight in the eye, not talking back to them. For a minute I thought I was looking at a scene from rural Georgia and not from Australia. I felt a complete connection to these women and their lives — everything felt so familiar to me. I wonder if it's like that for you to see us, to come in contact with Afro American women?

Eva: Yes, I do see that. I think it's related to the missionary syndrome, the mission thinking. You never, ever raise your head to the master, the person who owns you. And it is a form of inferiority embedded in you. I remember on the mission I never looked up to the house mother or the missionary, I always looked down.

And, of course, it's also traditionally taboo to look into someone's eyes. So there are the two different concepts of looking at someone. There is the traditional one of not doing it out of respect — and then on the mission we are taught not to look a white fella in the eye because he has to maintain the power of looking down on you.

I don't look down anymore, of course. I think one thing being politicized makes you do is look the oppressor in the eye. And of course, that really has incredible effects on him. It really gives me pleasure to confront white men now. When I'm doing one of my poems as a mission girl in front of an audience, I look around and point to white men and say, "Are you my father? My mum said he was white. Did you rape her? Did you love her?" and I point to another, "Or, are you my father?" They just cringe, they melt with fear.

Evelynn: The other part of my question is: what has been your experience of Afro American people since you've been here?

Eva: Oh, I have felt so free in talking here — I've experienced the situation of belonging to a powerful people. Aboriginal people haven't yet the ease of feeling powerful because we're still such a minority. I see a majority in this country in many cases. I walk down the street and I see more Black faces than white and I feel *great!* There's no need for me to hide myself. I can be strong. □



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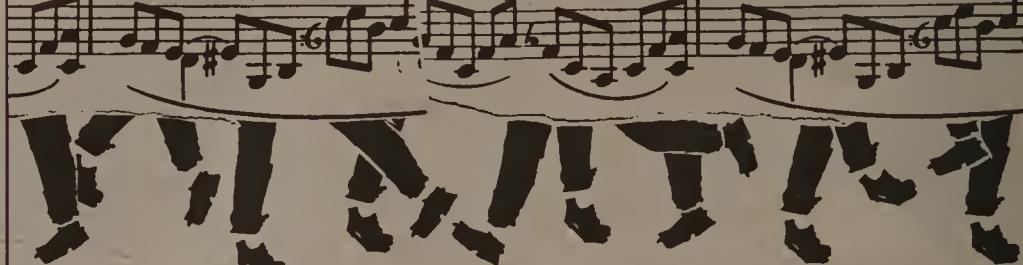
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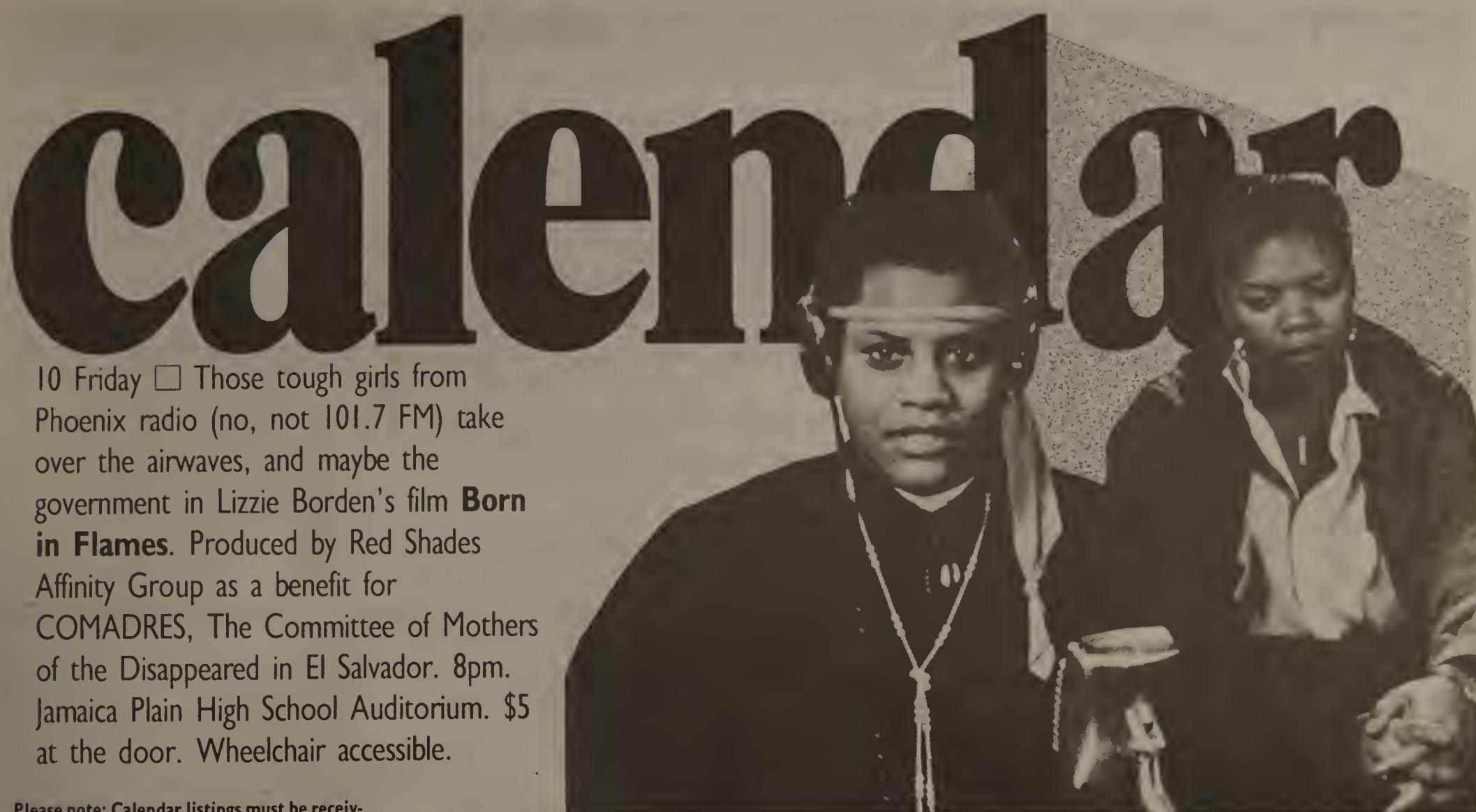
We are an anti-authoritarian workers collective and we offer FREE books to women in prison. We also accept donations of books or money from non-prisoners. Write: Books For Prisoners, Left Bank Books, Box A, 92 Pike St, Seattle WA 98101.

Looking for friendship. A gay friend in here told me how great your paper is and what it stands for. If there's anyway you could print my ad it would really help me more than I could do. Warren PRESLEY, 97404, Box 128, Edyville KY 42033

Bi-sexual man in need of someone that understands what it means to be lonely. Looking for a friend or relationship. John WAGNER, 79C 447, Box 500, Elmira NY 14902.

Gay male wants to correspond with gay males of any age or race. I enjoy sports, the outdoors, good movies, and reading. William JONES, D-13174, L-2, Reidsville GA 30499.

I'm a hermaphrodite, more female and will be undergoing correctional surgery. I like women and men, the arts, outdoors, cooking and computers. I can't write to prisoners but would like to hear from someone. Michelle ZIEGAST, P-9106, RD 10



10 Friday □ Those tough girls from Phoenix radio (no, not 101.7 FM) take over the airwaves, and maybe the government in Lizzie Borden's film **Born in Flames**. Produced by Red Shades Affinity Group as a benefit for COMADRES, The Committee of Mothers of the Disappeared in El Salvador. 8pm. Jamaica Plain High School Auditorium. \$5 at the door. Wheelchair accessible.

Please note: Calendar listings must be received by the Monday before the week of the event. Photos with listings are encouraged. Please specify if your event is or is not wheelchair accessible and/or sign language interpreted.

4 Saturday

Cambridge □ **March On Benefit** for Hospice at Mission Hill. Performance/Dance party. Camb. Multicultural Arts Ctr, 41 2nd St. 9pm-midnight. \$10. 617/577-1400.

Boston □ **South East Gay And Lesbian Country Dance Series**. 1st Church of Jamaica Plain, Centre and Eliot Sts. 8-11pm. \$5. Info: Barbara, 617/625-9166.

Boston □ **Greater Boston Chapter of the Imperial Court System** meeting. 2-4pm. Info: 617/497-8282.

Cambridge □ **Women's Craft Market**, celebrating International Women's Day. 11am-5pm. Also 3/11. 186 Hampshire St., downstairs.

Dorchester □ **12th Annual International Women's Day Celebration "Kitchen Table Conversations"**. Grover Cleveland School, 11 Charles St. 5:30-9pm. Free. Wheelchair accessible.

Boston □ **Alive With AIDS**. A new musical production by the Living with AIDS theatre project. Wed.-Sun. thru March 27. Club Cabaret, 209 Columbus Ave. 8pm. Tkt:\$18.50, \$16.50. Info: 536-0972.

Boston □ **Safe Sex**, Harvey (Torch Song Trilogy) Fierstein's campy play about love in the AIDS era. New Erich Theatre. Thru 5/14. 539 Tremont St. 8pm & 8:30pm. Info: 482-6316.

Cambridge □ **Princess Tam Tam and Zouzou**, theatrical premieres of two Josephine Baker films. Brattle Theatre, 40 Brattle St. thru 3/9.

5 Sunday

Boston □ **Live broadcast of the 5th International Women's Day Video Festival**. Boston Neighborhood Network, Cable channels A3 and A8. Noon-5pm.

Cambridge □ **Bell Hooks**, Black feminist theorist, appears at New Words Bookstore, 186 Hampshire St. 3-5pm. 617/876-5310.

Somerville □ **GLOSS**, Gays and Lesbians of Somerville and Surroundings potluck. 7pm. Info: Mike, 617/628-6956 or Rich, 776-6956.

6 Monday

Cambridge □ **Violence the Disease, Justice the Cure**. 99 Brattle St. 7-9pm. Info: 617/277-1330, 524-0821 (TTY). Wheelchair accessible.

Boston □ **Committee on Gay/Lesbian Issues, NASW** on building links btw/lesbians/gay men and their families. 7pm. Info: Cate, 617/391-2790.

7 Tuesday

Boston □ **Women's Health Leadership Awards** presented by the Dept. of Public Health in recognition of outstanding contributions to women's health. Done Hall, State House, 2-4pm.

Jamaica Plain □ **Lesbian and Gay Neighbors** meet for dinner at Doyle's Cafe. Washington St. 6:30 pm. Info: 524-0833.

Cambridge □ **Lesbian Alumnae of Wellesley (LAW)** planning meeting. Women's Center, 43 Pleasant St. 7:30. Wheelchair accessible. Info: 484-8527.

8 Wednesday

Boston □ **Women's Vigil for Justice** to support the poor and dispossessed. Wear dark clothes and bring your own light. Park St. station, 5:30-6:30pm.

Boston □ **When Women Lead** International Women's Day Celebration. Films, speakers, refreshment. Mass. College of Art, Longwood building. Corner of Longwood and Brookline Aves. 5:30-9:30pm. \$3. 617/266-5150.

Boston □ **Downtown Lesbians**. Brown Bag Lunch. 12:30. Info: Julie at 725-3562.

Somerville □ **Women's Vision**. Cable TV show produced by the Women's Video Collective. Ch. 3. 7 pm.

9 Thursday

Boston □ **GCN's production night**. All welcome. Proofreading starts at 5pm. Paste-up after 7pm. 62 Berkeley St., near Arlington & Back Bay T-stops. Info: **GCN**, 617/426-4469.

Boston □ **Joan Scott speaks on Feminism and History**. Northeastern U. Women's Studies Colloquium. Ell Building, Northeastern U. 8pm. 617/437-4984.

Cambridge □ **Discussion group for non-offending male sexual abuse victims**. Chamber of Commerce Conference Room, 859 Mass. Ave. 8:30-10pm. 617/498-9881.

Boston □ **Massage Intensive a Living Well workshop** sponsored by the Fenway Health Center. 93 Mass. Ave. 6-8pm. 617/267-0900.

Boston □ **Drop-in night for women concerned about AIDS**. Fenway Health Center, 93 Mass Ave, 3rd floor. 6:30-8pm. Wheelchair access. 617/267-0900.

10 Friday

Boston □ **GCN mailing**. Come help stuff the paper and meet new friends. 5pm to 10pm. 62 Berkeley St., near Arlington & Back Bay T-stops. Info: **GCN**, 617/426-4469.

Randolph □ **Picture with Gay Professional Women**. \$100 prize! Randolph country club. 8pm. 617/585-6051 (eves.)

Cambridge □ **Spring Dance** by Gays at MIT. Lobdell MIT Student Center, 84 Mass. Ave. 9pm-1am. \$3/4. 617/253-5440.

Jamaica Plain □ **Born in Flames**. Lizzie Borden's feminist sci-fi film. Benefit for COMADRES. JP High School. 8pm. Wheelchair accessible. \$5.

Cambridge □ **Women's Coffeehouse Birthday Party**. Help celebrate three years of women's entertainment. Women's Center, 43 Pleasant St. Wheelchair accessible. Info: 354-8807.

11 Saturday

Boston □ **In The Year of 13 Moons and Willow Spring**. Films by W.R. Fassbinder and Werner Schroeter. Boston Film/Video Foundation. 1126 Boylston St. 8pm. \$5 non-members/\$4 members. Info: 536-1540.

Northampton □ **Fetishes Show & Tell**. Shelix lesbian S/M support group's monthly meeting. 8 pm. Info/Location: 413/584-7616.

Boston □ **Women See Women**. Mass. Women's art on display. AAMARP Gallery, Northeastern Univ. 4-6:30pm. Thru 4/3. Info: 424-1411.

Boston □ **Visions of the Spirit**. Elena Featherston's new film about Alice Walker. Tower Auditorium, Mass College of Art. Huntington Ave. 8pm. Wheelchair accessible. Info: 424-1411.

Boston □ **Lily and May**. Acclaimed Australian comedy. Tower Auditorium, Mass. College of Art. Huntington Ave. 9pm. Wheelchair accessible. Info: 424-1411.

Roxbury □ **In Celebration of "The Women Who Take the Early Bus."** Honoring working women in Boston, South Africa and Palestine. Roxbury Community College Cafeteria. Childcare provided. 7:30pm. Donation requested. Info: 522-8728.

Cambridge □ **The 11th Annual International Women's Day Radio Celebration**. 16 hours of women's programming. WMBR. 88.1 FM. 8am-midnight.

Jamaica Plain □ **Lesbian and Gay Neighbors** Potluck. Bring food and non-alcoholic drink. First Church Unitarian, corner of Centre and Eliot Sts. 4-7pm. Info: 524-0833.

Brookline □ **Brookline/Brighton/Newton Lesbian Potluck**. Bring a game or just yourself. 6pm. Info: 232-5946.

Jamaica Plain □ **New England Lesbian Scientists Network**. Potluck brunch. 12noon. Info: 522-4384.

Nashua, NH □ **On Tidy Endings**. Harvey Fierstein's award-winning one act play. Palace Theater, Hanover St. Info: 603/668-5588.

Roslindale □ **Roslindale/Hyde Park/W. Roxbury Lesbian Neighbors**. Potluck. 6pm. Info: 364-9172.

Marlboro □ **WOBBLES** (West of Boston Lesbians). Trip to Boston flower show. Info: 508/568-4795.

Waltham □ **Women and Disabilities Workshop**. Presented by Francine Genn. Alumni Lounge, Brandeis University. 3pm. Info: 736-3740.

Cambridge □ **Coalition for Lesbian and Gay Civil Rights**. Planning meeting. 142 Memorial Drive, rm. 306. 7pm. Info: 776-6956.

Boston □ **Celebration '90: Gay Games III** and Cultural Festival. General meeting. B. Gibson Associates, 556 Tremont St. Info: 288-1606.

Boston □ **Body Electric: Healing with Group Sensual Massage**. For gay, bisexual men, thru 3/11. 551 Tremont St., studio 406. 7:30pm. \$12. 617/522-9164.

Cambridge □ **SANCHIN Women's School of Karate and Self Defense** for women of all ages, abilities. YWCA, 7 Temple St. 3-5pm. T.-Th. 6-8pm. 617/547-3889.

Boston □ **Living With AIDS Theatre Project** workshop. No performance experience necessary. Club Cabaret, 209 Columbus Ave. 10:30am.

Boston □ **Women's Self-Defense Collective Women's Self-Defense Classes** All ages and abilities. Meets Wed. eves., Sat. afternoons in South End. 617/574-9433.

Boston □ **Gay Boston**, with Jim Voltz. Boston Neighborhood Network, channels A3 and A8. 7:30-8pm.

Sunday

Boston □ **Boston Alliance of Gay and Lesbian Youth (BAGLY)**. Open to youth age 22 and under. 35 Bowdoin St. Sunday drop-in: 2-5pm. 617/354-6658.

Brookline □ **Swing and Ballroom Dance Classes** for Lesbians and Gay men. 1/8-3/5. 1636A Beacon St. \$55-60. 617/522-1444.

Boston □ **Metro Healing healing group** for everyone. Metropolitan Health Club aerobics room, 209 Columbus Ave. 7:30-9:30pm. 617/426-9205.

Boston □ **"Boston's Other Voice,"** radio for Gay/Lesbian community. WROR 98.5 FM. 11:00pm.

Boston □ **The Gay Dating Show**, WUNR 1600 AM. 2:30am. Lesbians and Gay Men.

Boston □ **Straight Talk About Disabilities**, March program on Employment. M/W nights at 7:30pm, Channel A-22.

Cambridge □ **Lesbian Rap**. Topic: 3/6 Erotic Writing. Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St. 8-10pm. Free. 617/354-8807 (TTY/voice).

Boston □ **Healing group** for everyone. Santa Fe Hair Salon, S28 Tremont St. 7:30-9:30pm. 617/426-9205.

Cambridge □ **Women's Coffeeshop**. 3/10 3rd Birthday Celebration. Women's Center, 46 Pleasant, 8pm-midnight. 617/354-8807 (TTY/voice).

Tuesday

Boston □ **Support Group for Battered Women** meets at 7pm. 617/899-8676.

Boston □ **Gay and Lesbian Support Group for Adult Children of Alcoholics**. Faulkner Hospital. 8:30-10pm. Intake interview required. 617/522-5800 x1908.

Boston □ **Lesbian and Gay Concert and Marching Band**. No audition necessary. YWCA, 120 Clarendon St. 7:15 p.m. Info: Joe 617/625-3304. Zoe 617/396-2989.

Providence, RI □ **ACT-UP/Rhode Island** open meetings. Rocket, 73 Richmond St. 7pm. Info: Bill 617/782-9063.

Roxbury □ **ACT UP/Boston** meets to confront the AIDS crisis. Room 345, Bldg. 3, Roxbury Community College. 7:00pm. 617/49-ACT UP.

Cambridge □ **Bisexual Women's Rap**: 3/7 Same vs. Opposite Sex Relationships. Women's Ctr, 46 Pleasant, 7:30-10pm. 617/354-8807 (TTY/voice).

Cambridge □ **30-plus Lesbian Rap** 3/7 Odd Couples/Mismatches. 7:30pm. The Women's Center (see above).

Wednesday

Boston □ **Boston Alliance of Gay and Lesbian Youth** Open to youth age 22 and under. 35 Bowdoin St. New persons' meeting 6pm; women and men meet separately 6:45-7:30; general meeting at 7:30pm. 617/354-6658.

Boston □ **Bisexual Children of Alcoholics**. Mass. General Hospital, lower amphitheater (next to emergency room entrance). 7:30pm. 617/259-1559.

Boston □ **New group forming for Lesbians who have been sexually harassed at work**. Wed. or Th. 617/492-7273.

Cambridge □ **"Say it Sister!"** WMBR, 88.1 FM. 7-8pm.

Cambridge □ **Lesbian Al-Anon** with childcare. Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St. 6:30-8pm. 617/354-8807 (TTY/voice).

Brookline □ **Boston Committee Determined to Free Sharon Kowalski** meets. Boston Self-Help Center, 18 Williston Rd. 7pm. 617/661-0533.

Cambridge □ **MASS ACT OUT** meeting. M.I.T., Building 66, Rm. 126. 7:30pm. 617/661-7737.

Thursday

Northampton □ **Valley Gay Alliance** meets 1st, 3rd Th. every month, basement of the Unitarian Church, 22 Main St. 7:30pm. 413/527-5310

Stoneham □ **Incest Survivors' Group** for women. New England Memorial Hospital, 5 Woodland Rd. 5-6:30pm. Info: Sara Epstein, 617/979-7025.

By Leslie Absher

BOSTON — Over 100 reproductive rights activists spent Jan. 22 — the sixteenth anniversary of the Supreme Court's *Roe v. Wade* decision legalizing abortion — strategizing about the fighting for reproductive freedom. The meeting, held at the University of Massachusetts at Boston, was organized by the Reproductive Rights Network (R2N2) and the Boston Women's Health Book Collective (BWHBC) — authors of *Our Bodies Ourselves*, and *Our Bodies Growing Older*.

The sense of urgency evident at the conference was at least in part due to the escalating demonstrations both locally and nationally by an anti-choice group calling itself "Operation Rescue." Participants at the conference also cited President George Bush's address to an anti-choice rally two days after being sworn in, and the Supreme Court's potential to overturn *Roe v. Wade* as further evidence that a woman's right to safe, legal, and funded abortions is under attack.

Ironically, as the panelists who addressed the conference agreed, the most profound omission from the abortion/reproductive rights debate continues to be the woman. Many panelists expressed frustration that the right to abortion continues to require defense, and that larger issues of reproductive freedom and women's rights must be confined to a debate on abortion. Activists who have been in the reproductive rights arena since the mid-sixties found it incredible to still be waging the same battle.

Elizabeth Hill, of R2N2, spoke of abortion as part of a larger group of urgent reproductive and health concerns for women. Hill listed the end to forced sterilization, responsive and accessible child care, the right for women to choose to bear children, fair gay and lesbian foster care policies, and non-toxic work and living environments as other needs as pressing as abortion. She also described R2N2 as a community-based grassroots organization that emphasizes coalition building among varying groups, creating videos, and writing leaflets as alternative and more effective tools for social change than elections and lobbying tactics.

Hill closed her address with a number of questions that outlined the agenda of the



Participants at the Jan. 22 forum (L-R) Beverly Smith, Susan Moirer, Norma Swenson, Marlene Fried. Signing behind Fried is Laurie Benjamin.

[abortion] which you might want to exercise in the future." She said that participation by Black women in reproductive rights struggles would most likely come from women's groups within the Black community.

Norma Swenson from BWHBC gave the third address as an overview of the first and second waves of American feminism: the first being concerned with the right to vote, and the second wave centering around women's health and sexuality. She listed some of the historical developments in the reproductive rights struggle both before and since *Roe v. Wade*, including: the emergence of female health practitioners (women either performing legal abortions or assisting medically within abortion clinics); the organization of the Jane Collective (a woman-organized underground abortion service founded in the late sixties and early seventies in Chicago in response to the tragedy of back alley abortions); and the dissemination of information and discussion about other reproductive rights issues.

The fourth speaker challenged the women's movement to be more open to disabled women and bring an awareness of disability to the abortion debate. Laura Rauscher from the Women in Disability Project said eugenics are a dimension in the fight for reproductive rights that feminists must continue to address. "How do we make sure we're giving women a choice in abortion around the issue of disability?" she asked. She emphasized that abortion, sterilization, genetic screening, and counseling are often used to eliminate people with disabilities. Rauscher explained that fundamental work must be done to break down the fear and stereotypes around having a child with disabilities. Women need to know that their disabled child has choices for her/his life. There are many ways in which connections between abortion and disability need to be addressed, so that the abortion rights community is not helping to eliminate people with disabilities.

Elizabeth McMahon from Amigas Latina en Accion pro-Salud (ALAS) followed Rauscher, and spoke about the sterilization of Latina women, particularly Puerto Rican women. She also touched on the emotional victimization a 15-year-old latina had experienced at the hands of "Operation

Continued on page 11

Reproductive rights activists take stock

Boston feminists analyze current state of struggle and insist on larger agenda than defending abortion

conference: How do we influence the Supreme Court, a body that is immune to political pressure? How do we deal with the most prominent anti-choice group, "Operation Rescue"? How do we put women back into the debate? And how do we expand this movement to include women of color, poor women and working class women?

The second organizer to address the conference was Beverly Smith, who spoke "Not just as a Black woman, but as all the things that I am, which is definitely a feminist and a health feminist who's been involved in this struggle for many, many years." Smith discussed her experience "before abortion was legal" and said that reproductive rights activists must effectively argue that abortion is necessary for women to be able to "choose ourselves" and have some control over the quality of our lives.

Smith also outlined some issues that affect the participation of women of color in the struggle for abortion. She said the

feminist connection to abortion sometimes "turns Black women off" because feminism is closely associated with white women. In addition, religious fundamentalism and the fear of genocide are issues for Black women in relation to abortion, she said.

Smith underscored the threat of genocide in the context of the AIDS epidemic, in which women of color, especially Black and Latina women, are disproportionately affected. "When you're talking about women and AIDS, think women of color," she said, adding, "We have to be very concerned about women of color being forced to be sterilized or have abortions because they are at high risk or because they are HIV positive."

Smith ended her talk by pointing out that abortion, and health issues in general, are not high priorities for Black women, especially poor Black women, who are more likely to be dealing with "immediate concerns" than working on "preserving a right

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